

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2017

Remarks at the National Peace Officers Memorial Service

May 15, 2017

Thank you, everybody. Wow, what a beautiful introduction. Thank you, Chuck. Come here. [*Laughter*] That was so nice. That was above and beyond. That's the way I'm going to be with you too. And it's a great honor—thank you very much—it's a great honor to address America's heroes on this most solemn occasion.

Words cannot express the depths of our gratitude, but I hope that our actions will show you how deeply we care and how strongly we feel about protecting those who protect us. America stands strong with our men and women in blue. Believe me, we stand strong together.

I want to recognize Jim Pasco, Linda Hennie, Chaplain Wiggins, and everyone at the Fraternal Order of Police for all that you do to protect the law enforcement of this country and all of our communities. Thank you very much. Thank you. Thank you very much. As long as I'm President, you will always find an open door to the White House. And you've already found it, believe me.

Mr. Vice President, Cabinet Secretaries, and Members of Congress: We are gathered here today at the U.S. Capitol to pay tribute to those brave law enforcement officers who gave their lives in the line of duty. On this Police Officers Memorial Day, we thank God for having blessed so many of us with such incredible heroes, and we pledge our solidarity with their families and loved ones. And many of those great families and survivors are here with us today, and I'd love you to stand up. Families and survivors—what great, incredible people. And your loved ones are looking down on you right now, believe me, and they're very proud. Thank you. [*Applause*] Thank you. Thank you very much for being here. Whatever you need, we are here for you, and we are praying for you.

As I look out today at this amazing assembly of police, detectives, marshals, and sheriffs, I want to make all of you remember and heed this promise: I will always support the incredible men and women of law enforcement as much as you have always supported me. And you did, big league.

Your presence here reminds us all of what is at stake on this sacred day of remembrance. Each May, during Police Week, new names of fallen police officers are added to the National Law Enforcement Memorial. This year, 394 brave souls joined the over 20,000 men and women who gave up their lives in the line of duty to protect us. The names of these heroes are not only carved into that wall, but carved into the hearts of the American people. And by the way, the American people love you, more than you will ever know. I can tell you that.

Though your loved ones left us much too soon, the memory of their courage will live on forever. To see so many names together is to gain only a small glimpse of the debt America owes to those who protect our cities and police on our streets.

We are privileged this morning to be joined by families of the fallen, to whom we owe that ultimate loyalty. So many people, even back here. Please know that you do not grieve alone. Though we cannot fathom the depths of your loss, nor fully appreciate the bond that forms in the precinct and between partners on the beat, your sadness is left and felt by all of us. Every drop of blood spilled from our heroes in blue is a wound inflicted upon the whole country. And

every heartache known by your families in law enforcement is a sorrow shared by the entire family of the American nation.

No one asked these selfless men and women to enlist in this righteous cause or to enroll as foot soldiers in the eternal struggle against crime and violence. They joined the cause because their hearts were big and full of amazing courage. They joined because they cared so deeply for the innocent and helpless and forgotten. They put on the uniform because they believed to the very core of their souls, that it was their mission in life to serve and to protect.

As the Bible tells us, there is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends. The names and stories on that wall are each a testament to this pure and unselfish love. And that's what it is: pure and unselfish love. And it is our duty as a people and as a nation to prove worthy of their sacrifice. And that begins with showing our police the appreciation they have earned a thousand times over.

Living in New York, I gained a deep appreciation and lasting admiration for law enforcement. Thousands of people are living and enjoying life today in New York who otherwise would be gone because our great police fought to bring safety to our streets and our communities. The entire world witnessed the heroism of New York's finest when they gave their lives on 9/11—I was there—and sacrificed so much in that brutal, horrible aftermath.

Now, as President, my highest duty is to keep America safe. We will keep America safe. And included in safe means safe from crimes, safe from terrorism, and safe from all enemies, foreign and domestic. At the center of that duty is the requirement to ensure that our law enforcement personnel are given the tools and resources they need to do their jobs and to come home to their families safely.

You are the thin blue line between civilization and chaos. You come from every community and all walks of life. You are mothers and fathers and sons and daughters. You rush into unknown danger, risking your lives for people you have never met, people you don't know, performing your duty under the most difficult conditions and often without any thanks at all.

Because you do not hear nearly enough, I want you to know that patriotic Americans of all backgrounds truly support and love our police. And a very sad thing is that many of today's politicians don't want to say that, don't want to talk about that because it's not politically correct or they think it might hurt them with the voters. I will say it, and I will talk about it proudly. I will make it the personal priority of my administration to ensure that our police are finally treated fairly, with honor and respect that they deserve.

To all Americans watching this event today, next time you see a cop on the beat, take a moment to say two wonderful words, which they so readily deserve: thank you. Thank you.

As you all know much too well, we are living through an era in which our police have been subject to unfair defamation and vilification, and even—really, I mean, you see what's going on, you see what's going—even worse, hostility and violence. More officers were slain last year in ambushes than in any year in more than two decades, including—and that's so incredible to even have to be speaking about this—the beloved officers killed in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, in yet another murderous attack of law enforcement. And we have some of those incredible families and survivors with us. Thank you.

The attacks on our police are a stain on the very fabric of our society, and you are entitled to leadership at the highest level that will draw a bright line in the sand—not a red line in the sand that isn't gone over—but a bright line in the sand. And we will protect you. That I can tell

you. And we will say, "Enough is enough." The attacks on our police must end, and they must end right now.

And just to show you, by the way, how much I love our police, I said, oh, I'm going to need a hat because it's so windy today. [*Laughter*] I said, when I got out here, there's no way I'm going to put on this hat. So we'll leave off the hat. And this is for you, Micah. That's from—that's for our beautiful Micah down there.

We must also end the reckless words of incitement that give rise to danger and give rise to violence. It is time to work with our cops, not against them, but to support them in making our streets safe; not to obstruct them, which we're doing. We obstruct them.

It is time for all Americans, from all parties and beliefs, to join together in a simple goal to ensure that every child in America has the right to grow up in safety, security, and peace. True social justice means a future where every child in every neighborhood can play outside without fear, can walk home safely from school, and can live out the beautiful dreams that fill their heart—like you, Micah.

Freedom includes the right to be free—and I mean totally free—from crime and from violence. MS-13 is going to be gone from our streets very soon, believe me. It's these two guys.

When policing is reduced, it's often the poorest and most vulnerable Americans who are the first to suffer. We have all seen the tragic rise in violence and crimes in many of our disadvantaged communities. We've seen the unbearable horror of the shortcomings in Baltimore and Chicago that have cut short so many lives and so many beautiful, beautiful dreams.

We cannot stand for such violence. We cannot tolerate such pain. We cannot, under any circumstances, any longer turn a blind eye to this suffering that's going on any longer. And we won't.

It's time for a grateful nation to join hands with our police and with our sheriffs to build the bridges of cooperation and trust and to make our streets safer for every man, woman, and child in America. And someday, many of the young children you are protecting will decide that they, too, want to be police officers, that they, too, want to be sheriffs, they want to be cops—they want to be cops. They want to protect people because they love people. And that's what they're going to do, and they're going to do it well. They're going to be great at it.

As we seek this better and brighter future, we do so in the memory of these brave but gentle souls who were stolen from this world when they had so much left to share and to give not only to us but to their incredible families.

Among them were Patrolman Justin Martin and Sergeant Tony Beminio, who were murdered last November. Patrolman Martin was on the beat for less than a year and leaves a beautiful, loving mom and dad, Randy and Jayne. And thank you, Randy and Jayne. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Sergeant Beminio was a veteran of 11 years and leaves behind his wife Zoe and his wonderful children Cameron, Haley, and Maddox.

Ashley Guindon of the Prince William County Police fell in the line of duty on her very first day on the beat. She swore the oath to protect and serve only a day prior to her death. One day. Officer Guindon was dedicated to serving our Nation; she also served in the Marines. And today our thoughts are with her and her incredible mother Sharon. Thank you, Sharon. Thank you. Thank you, Sharon. Thank you.

I also had the privilege to meet at the White House just a little while ago with representatives from the Phoenix Police Department, New Jersey State Troopers, and the Ulster County Sheriff's Department, who are mourning the deaths of State Trooper Frankie Williams and Sergeant Kerry Winters.

I had the chance to spend time with Officer Glasser's beautiful family, his wife Kristen and his 6-year-old son Micah—who has my hat, and he's now with us. Micah, stand up. Kristen, please stand up. Great people. Kristen and Micah, I know your beloved husband and father is looking down on you right now from heaven, and he is so proud of you both. And thank you very much. Thank you.

We also remember those incredible heroes who were so cruelly targeted for execution in Dallas, Texas, rushing into a hail of gunfire, never to return. Dallas Police Sergeant Michael Smith was a 27-year veteran of the Dallas Police. He was decorated a law enforcement officer at the highest level and even paid his own way to attend advanced training sessions. He leaves behind his cherished wife Heidi and his loving daughters Victoria and Caroline. Thank you. Thank you very much. Thank you.

Last Friday, in Kirkersville, Ohio, a gunman shot and killed Steven Eric DiSario. He was the Chief of the Kirkersville Police Department. He died responding to a hostage situation at a local nursing home. Chief DiSario leaves behind six children and his wife, who is expecting another child. Our hearts break for the Chief's family. We love you all. We love you all. Thank you.

To every child in America who has lost a mom or a dad in the line of duty, I want you to know your parents are American heroes—American heroes. They died keeping us safe. They are the pride of our Nation. And we will hold them in our hearts always and forever. Their sacrifice will never, ever be forgotten.

To everyone in the audience here today, I want you to know that my administration is determined—totally determined—to restore law and order and justice for all Americans, and we're going to do it quickly.

And that is why I'm so proud to be here today with Attorney General Jeff Sessions and Homeland Security Director John Kelly, two men who are deeply committed to the rule of law, to the rank-and-file officers who enforce it, and to bringing the violent criminals, drug dealers, and gang members to justice. And I mean bring them to justice quickly. Thank you very much for being here.

All of you at this ceremony, the men and women who police the streets or who send our loved ones to work with a really very, very, sometimes worried or heavy heart—every single day you do that—you've seen and you've heard things that no one else should ever have to see or hear. You bear this burden on our behalf. You have witnessed the evil of those who derive pleasure from inflicting pain on the innocent. You've seen a lot of that more recently than maybe ever before. It's going to stop. And you've watched great, great people suffer unthinkable harm and unthinkable death.

America as a nation must always have the clarity to know the difference between good and evil, between right and wrong, and between those who uphold our laws and those who so easily break them. We owe it to the fallen to act according to our best and highest ideals. We owe it to their memory to put truth before politics, justice before agendas, and to put the safety and security of the American people above everything else. And we owe it to them to build a better future for all of America's wonderful children.

May today be the beginning of a new era of respect and appreciation for law enforcement. May this ceremony bring new hope to those in search of healing, harmony, and peace. May Americans learn from the example of the heroes we have lost, and always remember to trust each other, work with each other, and love each other.

And finally—and so importantly—may God bless you. May God bless our police. And may God bless the United States of America. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:02 p.m. on the West Front lawn at the U.S. Capitol. In his remarks, he referred to K. Charles Canterbury, Jr., national president, James O. Pasco, Jr., executive director, Linda Hennie, auxiliary president, and Philip Wiggins, Fraternal Order of Police; Vice President Michael R. Pence; Secretary of Labor R. Alexander Acosta; Secretary of Transportation Elaine L. Chao; Officer Matthew Gerald and Corporal Montrell Jackson, Baton Rouge Police Department, and Deputy Brad Garafola, East Baton Rouge Sheriff's Office, who were killed in Baton Rouge, LA, on July 17, 2016; Micah Glasser, son, and Kristen Glasser, wife, of Officer David Glasser of the Phoenix Police Department, who was killed in Phoenix, AZ, on May 19, 2016; Randy and Jayne Martin, parents, of Patrolman Justin S. Martin of the Urbandale Police Department, who was killed in Urbandale, IA, on November 2, 2016; Zoe Beminio, wife, and Cameron, Haley, and Maddox Beminio, children, of Sgt. Anthony D. Beminio of the Des Moines Police Department, who was killed in Des Moines, IA, on November 2, 2016; Sharon Guindon, mother of Officer Ashley M. Guindon of the Prince William County, VA, Police Department, who was killed in Woodbridge, VA, on February 27, 2016; Trooper Frankie L. Williams of the New Jersey State Police, who was killed in a traffic accident in Millville, NJ, on December 5, 2016; Sgt. Kerry J. Winters, Sr., of the Ulster County Sheriff's Office, who was killed in a training accident in Ulster County, NY, on September 22, 2016; Lorne Ahrens, Michael Krol, Michael J. Smith, and Patrick Zamarripa, Dallas Police Department officers, and Brent Thompson, Dallas Area Rapid Transit officer, who were killed in Dallas, TX, on July 7, 2016; Heidi Smith, wife, and Caroline and Victoria Smith, children of Officer Smith; Aryn, wife, and Olivia, Braydon, Grace, Chloe, and Kameron DiSario, children, of Steven E. DiSario, police chief, Kirkersville Police Department, who was killed in Kirkersville, OH, on May 12; and Thomas Hartless, suspected gunman in the Kirkersville shooting.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : National Peace Officers Memorial Service.

Locations: Washington, DC.

Names: Beminio, Cameron; Beminio, Haley; Beminio, Maddox; Beminio, Zoe; Canterbury, K. Charles, Jr.; DiSario, Aryn; Glasser, Kristen; Glasser, Micah; Guindon, Sharon; Hennie, Linda; Kelly, John F.; Martin, Jayne; Martin, Randy; Pasco, James O., Jr.; Pence, Michael R.; Sessions, Jefferson B., III; Smith, Caroline; Smith, Heidi; Smith, Victoria; Wiggins, Philip.

Subjects: Holidays and special observances : Peace Officers Memorial Day and Police Week; Homeland Security, Department of : Secretary; Justice, Department of : Attorney General; Law enforcement and crime : Crime rate; Law enforcement and crime : Fraternal Order of Police; Law enforcement and crime : Gang violence, prevention efforts; Law enforcement and crime : Law enforcement officers, memorial service; Law enforcement and crime : Law enforcement officers, service and dedication; Law enforcement and crime : State and community law enforcement agencies, Federal support; Law enforcement and crime : Violence against law enforcement officers, prevention efforts; Louisiana : 2016 shootings of law

enforcement officers in Baton Rouge; Terrorism : September 11, 2001, attacks; Texas : 2016
shootings of law enforcement officers in Dallas; White House Office : Vice President.

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